

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

FIRST QUARTER, LESSON I.

January 5. Ezra III: 1-13.

BY REV. W. O. HOLWAY, U. S. N.

DATE: B. C. 535.

OUTLOOK: The Persian empire ruled the East, and Cyrus, its founder, was on the throne. This was the day of the great monarchies, and lasted 228 years—B. C. 539-330. Two years before the date of our lesson Cyrus had captured Babylon, and made it his capital. Among the captives he found the Israelites, who for nearly seventy years had languished in this alien land, and whose chief prophet, Daniel, had been made the third ruler of the Babylonian kingdom on the very night of its overthrow. It was probably through his influence, and also from the fact that the Jews were monotheists like himself, that Cyrus was stirred up to decree their restoration. The remarkable prophecy in Isaiah, in which he had been designated by name as the "shepherd," the "anointed of God," "to perform all My pleasure," doubtless led to the acknowledgment which he caused to be engraved throughout his kingdom, that the God of Israel was the God; and that He, who had given Cyrus all the kingdoms of the earth, had charged him to build Him a house at Jerusalem, in Judah. The Old Testament lessons of last year ended with the decree, given by the ruler of the Temple—some 5,400 in number—and led by Zerubbabel, the high priest, and Joshua, the high priest, some 50,000 of these emancipated captives set out joyfully on their return to their beloved land.

The return of the Jews synchronized with the beginning of the classical era in Greece and the rise of the Republic in Rome. The Persians still ruled in Persia, but the last and most glorious of their kings was on the throne. In Greece, Pythagoras, Solon and Esop had lived, and passed away. The first public library had been founded in Athens, and Ptolemy, the tyrant, ruled the rising city. In this age also flourished Confucius, the Chinese philosopher.

PREFACE: The Jews regard the books of Ezra and Nehemiah as one book. In this they were followed by the early Christian fathers. Modern criticism has detected a double authorship, and has therefore divided the books. The Book of Ezra is written in Chaldean Hebrew. The first six chapters narrate the return from the captivity and the rebuilding of the Temple—a period of nearly twenty-five years. The remaining chapters take up the history after an interval of fifty-seven years, and record the events of a single year (B. C. 458-457), in which Ezra is himself the principal actor.

THE SECOND TEMPLE.

I. The Altar Set Up. Vs. 1-6.

When the seventh month, etc.—This was the Jewish sacred, or festival, month, corresponding with our September and early October, and known as the month Tishri. The journey from Babylon had probably occupied four months, and the people, on arriving, had scattered to their tribal settlements with the understanding that they were to convene at the opening of the seventh month at Jerusalem and re-inaugurate the national worship. They came together as one man—a unanimity which might have been expected, when we read in the Psalms, written during the captivity, the intense love which the exiles cherished for the Holy City and its sacred fountains. Henceforth the name of Israel gives way to the name of *Judean*, or *Jew*. "It was born," says Josephus, "on the day when they came out from Babylon, and their history thenceforth is the history, not of Israel, but of Judaea."

The sacred year had heretofore begun in April, or April (according to the moon), the month of the exodus from Egypt. Henceforth, the seventh month, became the sacred month, the first month of the year (Nisan, or Nisan, the month of the Passover, and the month of the political career of Disraeli, in 1843, something to be both laughed and revered over. Many a serious in jest.

Then stood up, etc.—The leaders in the Return had been Joshua, the high priest (Hag. 1: 1), the son of Josadac (1 Chron. 6: 15), and grandson of the high priest Serubbabel, who had been put to death by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25: 18-21); and Zerubbabel, the grandson, real or adopted, of the royal Jehoiachin, the last direct heir of the house of David and Josiah. His official title of *Tirshath* (or *Pasha*) "has never since died out among the governments of the East." Directed and aided by these leaders, the priests cleared away the debris from the foundations of the old altar, and on the historic site once occupied by the threshold of Araunah, and then consecrated by five centuries of sacrificial worship, they reared the heart-stones of their future Temple. Soon, amid the rejoicings of the people, after an interval of nearly seventy years, the smoke of sacrifice rose on the air; and the returned exiles, who had looked with dismay at the heathen settlers upon their soil, felt assured that the God who had so signally fulfilled His word, would accept their offerings, and be a shield to His people round about. Thenceforward, all things commanded by Moses—the "set feasts," and "new moons," and "continual burnt-offering," and "freewill offerings"—were honored with a promptitude and heartiness of observance which showed that the lessons of the captivity had not been lost on them. On the fifteenth day of the month they celebrated their feast of tabernacles, thankful, doubtless, that though their untilled soil had yielded no harvest of corn, and wine and oil, their hearts had brought forth "fruits meet for repentance."

Though full of business to provide necessities for themselves, yet they left all their business in the country to attend God's altar. The worldly business was postponed to the business of religion, and it will prosper better (Heb. 12: 18). "The altar was built on the foundations of the altar," says the apostle, "but as it is in vain to build on the sand, so is the building of the altar, which is not on the rock." (1 Cor. 13: 1-3). "The altar was built on the foundations of the altar," says the apostle, "but as it is in vain to build on the sand, so is the building of the altar, which is not on the rock." (1 Cor. 13: 1-3).

From Oliver Dutton & Co.: Whispers from Scotland, and by Octave Feuillet. Vocal: My Soul, adapted to "Sweet Prayer," by Wm. Vincent. Rev. J. D. Leavitt, Op. 24, No. 1. Record, containing the following: "The Little Flower," by Arthur Sullivan; "Christ: The Golden Star," words by music by J. P. Webster. The people of these countries whose "fear" stimulated the Jews to erect an altar before building a fortification, were the Samaritans and Syrians on the north, the Edomites on the south, the Moabites and Ammonites on the east, and the Philistines on the west. Only a small strip of country, around Jerusalem, was left to them, and was exposed to robber bands that roved through it. For burnt-offerings, see Deut. 12: 13, 15; also Exod. 29: 38-42. For the feast of tabernacles, see Lev. 23: 34-35; Deut. 16: 13; 18: 22; 28: 43. For "new moons," see Num. 28: 11-15. For "freewill offerings," see Deut. 16: 10, 16.

II. The Temple Foundations Laid. Vs. 7-10.

They gave money, etc. Preparations were at once made to rebuild the Temple. As in the case of its predecessor Lebanon yielded its cedars, which were brought down to the sea-coast, floated across the country to Jerusalem. A liberal supply of meat and drink, and oil, was furnished to the Zionian foresters, and masons and carpenters were hired to clear the ground, and make ready to receive and fit the timber when it arrived.

For the bargain between Solomon and Hiram, king of Tyre, with reference to the timber for the first Temple, see 1 Kings 7: 23-26. Cyrus never ruled Persia, but he could give the Jews permission to trade (Cook).

In the second year, etc.—Some six or seven months were spent in preparation, and in April, or May, of the second year, the rubbish and debris were removed, and sufficient materials collected to inaugurate the work. The "great stones, costly stones, and hewed stones" had been prepared, and the Levites, above the age of twenty, had been appointed overseers "to set forward" the work.

Zerubbabel and Joshua continue to take the lead. "It is remarkable," says Smith, "that the high priest, the supreme authority in the restored religious commonwealth, bore the name at once of the captain who at first led Israel into the Holy Land, and of the Messiah whose type he is made in the prophecies of Zechariah."—Three Levitical houses are specified—those of Jeshua (the high priest), Kadmiel and Henadai.

And when the builders laid, etc.—The laying of the foundation-stones was an event too important and interesting to be passed by without a befitting solemnity. The people gathered anew to Jerusalem. The priests arrayed themselves in the blue and scarlet and purple robes, with gold and gems, prescribed (Exod. 28) for official celebrations. The singers, the descendants of Asaph, were arranged in responsive choirs, and at the proper signal, the silence of over fifty years was broken by the peal of trumpets and the clash of cymbals, and the grand old doxology was heard once more in the Holy City, of "Praise the Lord, for He is God, for His mercy endureth forever."

For "the ordinance of David," see 1 Chron. 23: 13. For Asaph, one of the three leaders of David's choir, see 1 Chron. 15: 8; 16: 19. The priests, in their rich dresses, and Zerubbabel, in his princely mantle, had furnished, blew once more their silver trumpets; the sons of Asaph once more clashed their brass cymbals. Many of the Palms which all the Psalter with joyous strains, were doubtless sung, or composed, to the praise of the Lord. "Many of the Palms which all the Psalter with joyous strains, were doubtless sung, or composed, to the praise of the Lord. 'Through all the national vicissitudes of weal and woe, it was felt that the divine goodness had remained firm' (Stanley)."

III. Joy and Weeping. Vs. 11-13.

All the people shouted, etc.—It was an intense moment. The hearts of the people were profoundly stirred. For many years, in a strange land, they had hung harps on the willows, and hushed the harp of the song, while they breathed maledictions upon themselves in case the seductive influences around them should steal away their hearts from their fatherland. "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning." No wonder that when the Lord turned again their captivity, it was like "a dream," too good to be true. No wonder that their "mouths were filled with laughter," and their "tongues with singing." "No wonder that when the day arrived, 'the burst of joy was such as has no parallel in sacred Volume.'"

Ancient men.—But there was a minor key in this almost universal exultation. The white-haired "chiefs of the fathers" and the venerable priests and Levites, who had seen the glory of Solomon's Temple, were deeply affected at the comparative poverty and meanness of the preparations and materials for the new structure, and lifted up their voices in loud lamentation. But they were too few in number to be heard at any distance, and their mournful walls were drowned in the joyful exclamations, which rose over the yet ruined city, and rolled over Olivet, and were heard far off towards Samaria.

"Their mourning arose from the perception that the new Temple, taken altogether, would be 'as nothing in comparison with the old one.' The old Temple, which was commissioned to comfort them by the assurance that the deity of this Temple would be as great as that of the old one, was now to be replaced by the coming of the Messiah, whose presence should give to the second house a glory greater than that which the first house could boast."—"Among Eastern people, expressions of sorrow are always loud and vehement. It is indicated by the fact that the Jews, who are not easily distinguishable from joyful exclamations."

GLEANINGS.

1. Long and loud were these Jewish *Deus* re-echoed by the shouts of the multitude. It was not, indeed, a day of unmingled joy, for amongst the crowd there stood some aged men who had lived through the great catastrophe of the captivity; who in their youth had seen the magnificent structure of Solomon standing in its unbroken splendor; and when they compared with that vanished splendor these scanty beginnings, they could not refrain from bursting forth into a loud wail of sorrow at the sad contrast. The two strains of feeling—the old and the young generation mingled together in a rivalry of emotion, but the evil omen of the lamentation was drowned in the cry of exultation; and those who stood on the outskirts of the solemnity caught only the impression of the mighty shout that rang afar off—far off, as it seemed, to the valleys of Samaria (Stanley).

2. But they carried back greater riches than all the treasures of Persia, in the moral gains of their captivity. Throughout the history of the monarchy we have never lost sight of the fact that that form of government was itself a departure from the will of God. The attempt to consolidate the nation violated the constitution of the Church. Though, on the great principle of condescension and forbearance, God made this defection the occasion of His new covenant with Da-

vid, the inherent vices of the monarchy broke out into that long course of idolatry and worldly pride, which was cut short by the captivity of both branches of the nation. After the captivity we hear no more of these forms of evil. The Scriptures, collected into a "canon" soon after the return, superseded the prophetic office; their regular reading in the synagogues (which took their rise during the period of exile) presented that ignorance which had been so fatal under the monarchy; and the "scribes," who devoted themselves to their exposition, shared the respect paid to the priests and Levites. Prayer, private as well as public, regained that supreme place in God's worship which had been usurped by rites and ceremonies. The Sabbath, which the prophets never cease to represent as the keystone both of religion and of the charities of social life, was firmly established, after a sharp contest with worldly selfishness. Idolatry was henceforth unknown; and the attempt of the Syrian kings to impose its practice, adorned the Jewish Church with a cloud of martyrs, whose constancy confirms the many other proofs that the people had attained to a more spiritual faith. The shades of this fair picture, however, were yet in the background, and the current of the history brings them into prominence soon enough. They are the vices which our corrupt nature disilluminates from the virtues of the past, perverting the uses of God's worship; oppression and immorality, excused by the privileges of God's people (Smith).

FROM OUR MISSION ROOMS.

A son of Rev. Henry Astor—the father-in-law of our Rev. J. V. Butler—left on the "City of Vera Cruz," Saturday, 14th inst., for Mexico. He will prove an acquisition to our mission.

The Shanghai mission (China) of the M. E. Church, South, at their annual meeting showed the following statistics: Four American missionaries, ten native preachers, and one colporteur. Their work is divided into six districts, in charge of three Presiding Elders; there are ten Sunday-schools, 172 scholars, and eighteen teachers. They sold 4,309 volumes, and donated 301 volumes, and 1,300 sheet tracts.

Rev. T. S. Johnson, M. D., writes from Shahjehanpore, India: "I recently baptized 86 orphan boys, four adults, and three of their children. I am worked so closely that I am beginning to feel weary and desirous of rest, but the work is so pressing that I cannot get away from it."

The November meeting of the Wesleyan Mission Board, or executive committee, shows the presence of 16 ministers and 21 laymen. The finance committee seem by their reports to afford the principal basis of action to the meeting. The board, as such, fall in with the sublime movement of clearing off the connectional debts, including the missionary debt, and give the Mission Rooms for the meetings of the managers of that movement, contemplating as it does the gathering of \$1,000,000.

Rev. Dr. Thoburn writes, under date of Nov. 7: "We have blessings here in Calcutta. We have much trial to endure, but God leads us on. I go to the country to-morrow to baptize five Hindus. Miss Layton is a very valuable addition to our work in Calcutta. Conference is a great trial to us here. I shall have to travel either 800 miles by sea or 2,000 miles by rail in order to get to Conference at Madras."

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNG THINKERS.

[For scholars between the ages of 13 and 18.]

1. Explain what led to the emancipation of the Jews from Babylon.
2. Enumerate the events and names of persons contemporary with the return of the Jews.
3. How many Jews returned, and what was their first act? Who were their leaders?
4. Describe in detail the worship they inaugurated. Was the new altar of the same size as the old?
5. Of what people were they afraid?
6. What preparations were made for rebuilding the Temple? How long before the foundation-stones were laid?
7. Describe the ceremonial at the laying of the foundation-stones.
8. In what different ways was the emotion of the people expressed, and why?
9. What spiritual lessons can you deduce from this narrative?

OUR OFFERING TO THE KING.

CHRISTMAS CAROL.

BY EBEN E. REKFOR.

Let every heart be gladness sing
From mountain to the sea,
In praise and honor of the King
They crowned on Calvary.

O Saviour, in a manger born,
Accept the love we bring,
As shepherds brought, on Christmas morn,
Their offering to the King.

Dear Saviour, let us at Thy feet
Our tribute offering lay,
And may these gifts of ours be sweet
With gratitude to-day.

Dear Lord, we bring our hearts to Thee;
Accept them as Thine own;
And let us celebrate with Thee
Thy birthday by the Throne.

Let every heart repeat again
The choral of the sky,
"Be peace on earth, good-will to men!"
Let strife and discord die.

RELIGIOUS ITEMS.

Seventh St. Church, New York, has received fifty-four members as a result of Mr. Murphy's meetings; they were all addicted to drinking.

The Nashville Christian Advocate reports that there have been 3,500 conversions to the M. E. Church, South, in the North Carolina Conference this year—the fruits of revivals.

St. George's Church, the oldest Methodist Church in Philadelphia, and the second in America, celebrated its 100th anniversary on the 21st and 24th ult.

The will of the late Thomas H. Powers, of Philadelphia leaves \$4,000 to the Reformed Episcopal Church annually for twenty years.

The Methodist Recorder (London), in an editorial on the growth of the English Wesleyan Church, says: Mr. Wesley left at his death in 1791 upward of 70,000 members, and at the beginning of the present century the number had increased to nearly 110,000. Since then the following decennial increases have been reported: (1800-10), 55,837; (1810-20), 25,419; (1820-30), 57,375; (1830-40), 74,686; (1840-50), 35,000; (1850-60), 42,466; (1860-70), 109,380; (1870-78), 32,405.

The Alabama Conference met in Weaver's Chapel, near Brewster, Ala., on the 21st ult. Bishop Wiley presided, and J. B. Miller was elected moderator. Dr. Rust was present. The Conference received some valuable addresses from Georgia, in the persons of Revs. T. A. Pharr, J. W. Ballou, and P. T. M'Whorter. An increase was reported in the membership.

Rev. Isaac P. Cook, of Baltimore, celebrated his seventieth birthday anniversary on the afternoon of Dec. 31. A large company of prominent ministers and laymen, representing the several branches of Baltimore Methodism, was present. Congratulatory letters from Rev. Dr. R. D. Dabshall, J. O. Peck, and other friends, were received during the day. Rev. Dr. Kepler, of the M. E. Church, South, read an appropriate original poem prepared for the occasion. Brother Cook is still hard at work finishing his book, "The Heroes of the Baltimore Conference and their Lay Helpers."

The Baptist Churches of Long Island during the ecclesiastical year just closed added 631 by baptism to their membership, so that they now have 10,339 members. Their total contributions for all purposes amounted to \$185,000, or nearly \$18 per member. The Long Island Association maintains ten missionaries and nineteen mission stations.

The Moravians report 68 Churches in this country with as many ministers, besides a few Churches and ministers in the South. There are five churches in Philadelphia, with 736 communicants.

In regard to the Collegiate Dutch Church in New York, Dr. Vermilye, in his address, said: "In the history of this Church there have been twenty-eight pastors and six edifices. We have trained 27,000 children, and, having started with fifty souls at all down the Lord's Supper, we now number 11,000 communicants in our Church. Nearly \$400,000 of the Church's funds have been devoted to outside charity."

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ZION'S HERALD.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1878.

The national event of last week was the death of Bayard Taylor, minister of the United States to the German Court—an event not entirely unexpected, as he has been seriously threatened with the disease, dropsy, which has since proved fatal, from the opening of his present honorable appointment. Mr. Taylor was still in his prime—but fifty-four years of age. His literary career has been remarkably successful, from his first volume, in 1845, entitled, "Views Afloat," or Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff," recounting a pedestrian tour (undertaken in this way, both for the benefit of his means, and to give him a better idea of the common life of Europe), to his last elaborate poem, "Deukalion." His volumes of travel in all parts of the world, of works of the imagination, descriptive letter-press of illustrated books, and poems, make a small library, and a valuable one, of themselves, and have been very successful in securing a large and appreciative patronage. Mr. Taylor's appointment to his present mission met with a remarkably unanimous sentiment of approval throughout the country, and was equally welcomed by the German Court and the American colony in Berlin. He has shown both ability in the special work of his office, and a courtesy to his visiting countrymen of every grade, that have made him a very popular minister. He married, in 1864, Marie, daughter of Professor Housen—an eminent German astronomer—and his wife has translated several of his books into her native tongue, where they have been well received.

Great Britain is passing through a much severer business depression than the financial embarrassments with which we have been struggling for a few years; the crash comes more suddenly and is every way more serious. Business has become consolidated in England into great corporations—banking, manufacturing, and commercial—and the failures of these concerns affect a broad field of sufferers. Besides, in the British Isles, strikes, failures and stoppages in business, involve not simply the temporary diminution of income, or a loss of wages, but, in thousands of instances, an enforced pauperism, an absolute lack of bread, and an enormous increase of general taxation. There has been a serious amount of loss and inconvenience, much personal suffering, considerable loss of work, but comparatively little abject poverty and starvation with us, and no large increase of tax on account of pauperism. The country is large, land is cheap and available, and a family driven from the mill, with average thrift, can find upon a farm, or in some other employment, the means of fighting hunger from the door. The hour is a remarkable one in a business point of view. Never before, in modern times, have these financial calamities been so general on both sides of the Atlantic as now, and our social philosophers have a fine opportunity for practical study, to discover the causes and suggest adequate remedies in the future.

Kings have their "life-guards," attending them when they journey, and defending them against hostile advances. All this is well. Saints, however, have far better guardianship. They are "kings and priests unto God." As children of the Highest, heirs apparent to a throne and kingdom, they have their "life-guards." Who or what are they? It is written, "He shall give His angels charge concerning thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." Here, then, are the "life-guards" of the sons and daughters of the King of glory. What enemy can fly so swiftly, or overwhelm them in strength? None, absolutely none. Poor, timorous one, let thy fears be dissipated. Who shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

You are not the proprietor of those possessions which go in your name. You are a steward in the household of the great King, and your commission runs, "Occupy till I come." You are not to sit idle and to leave His large interests unused; you are not to use them as though their sole design was to minister to your personal pleasure and convenience. The Lord of these possessions is not niggardly in dealing with His servants; He would have them live comfortably off the service; but He would not have them come to entertain the hallucination that the title is in them. And it is demanded of a steward

that he be faithful. How great is the responsibility of acting for others, especially in these high and important relations! How careful should you be that the interests of your Principal do not suffer—that when He comes He shall receive His own with usury. Use this world as not abusing it—use with an eye to the reckoning day.

If unable to tell definitely what heaven will be, we, nevertheless, feel assured that it will be the summary of the best the universe affords. Heaven will be the absence of sin, the presence of God, angels and saints; evil being excluded, there will be a place of joy, where all tears will be forever dried, all wants excluded, all fullness communicated. If on earth we suffer with a sense of our deficiencies, heaven will be crowned with completeness. The cup so long empty will be filled to overflowing; the void of the soul, the sense of need so long latent, will be replenished. Out of a restless life, full of care, toil and trouble, we shall awake to be satisfied with His likeness. To be satisfied? Oh, strange and blessed experience! Can these poor hearts, which have been so little content here, enter into such a blessed fruition hereafter? Even so! The promise assures; faith humbly accepts.

A hearty and intense appreciation of the work to which your life is devoted, is an important means of success. An enthusiast doubles his natural resources. Blind to obstacles, he has a keen perception of lines along which an advance is possible. Intensity is allied to genius, and will enable one to dispense with that rare gift. It may be lawful to look coolly on until you have chosen a calling; but the union once consummated should be cherished with a devout and undying affection.

The measure of your blessing is left very much to yourself. The Gospel is a body of provisions; these are abundant and full. Great as may be your needs, the store of grace is still greater. But whether you come into possession of the blessing depends on the strength of your faith. It is provided for you, is adapted to meet your general and specific wants, but can become available to you only as you reach forth and appropriate it.

To deprive the humblest citizen of his rights is to endanger the liberties of the nation. The justice in which his cause is entrenched is endowed with infinite strength, and will rise superior to all adverse interests and parties. To have justice with us is to be married to Almightiness; to have justice against us is to be oppressed with inexplicable weakness.

THE CHRIST POWER.

"This is the month, and this the happy morn,
Wherein the Son of heav'n's eternal King,
Of wedded Maid, and Virgin Mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing."

Thus sang Milton in the prelude of his great hymn on the Nativity. But it cannot by any means be proved that December is the "month," or its twenty-fifth day the "happy morn," when shepherds, on the slopes of Bethlehem, heard

"Such music as 'tis said
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
And the well-balanced world on hinges hung;
And east and dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep."

It is much easier to show that this is not, than that it is, the date of the wonderful event which has changed the world's chronology. There may be special reasons why the exact period has been providentially hidden from the world. There is such a tendency in human nature to forget the substance in its shadow, the real significance in a symbol; such a liability to invest place and time with the sacredness that attaches to the divine Presence manifested in them, and to worship the altar rather than the Shekinah that once hovered over it, that God has been pleased to permit honest doubt to invent the exact site of every sacred locality in Palestine—save the great natural features of this storied land—and to hang a still more impenetrable shadow over the precise hour when He, who was of woman born, and conceived of the Holy Ghost, first uttered a mortal cry upon the earth.

But with all this uncertainty, as the received date throughout Christendom of the astonishing event, and the only one in which it is formally acknowledged upon the earth, with what a realistic apprehension of the incidents it commemorates it has become invested! The Churches that, from their peculiar horror of the deformities and idolatries of popery, had at first banished every Church festival from their calendar, are melting under the warm atmosphere of Christian love, that, simply by the law of association, is now investing Christmas day; and not because lenient towards a Church that has betrayed her Lord, but through sincere love for Him, and interest in every incident of His life; in the natural desire to set apart some day for the contemplation of this majestic event; and to give the childhood, into which the Lord Christ entered and which He loved, an appropriate and instructive festival, where they slowly and a little reluctantly filed into line; and Christmas comes with its spiritual carols, its gifts of love, and its words of world-wide charity, to nearly all the Protestant, as well as Roman Catholic, religious bodies. The sun

will not go down to-morrow on its strains of praise. It will awaken songs in Japan; they will swell up in memory of the Infant of Bethlehem in all the sun's course through the heavens, and die away with him as he descends into the Pacific behind his Christianized islands.

Thus everything with which Christ is associated seems to have an immortal life. The art, whether in sculpture, or painting, or temple of worship, that has embodied Him, or any incident in His life, seems invested with an earthly immortality; the idea of Christ has inspired genius in all the provinces of His triumph to its highest efforts. The great masters of song have made their music both heavenly and unapproachable by singing of Him whose advent and reign the angels of God chanted. The one life that is never exhausted, that is painted, engraved, sung and written, over and over again, is the human life of the Son of Man who was also the Son of God. No skepticism can destroy the common current of faith in the Christianized world, as to the historical verities of the New Testament. No sneer of the cynic can drive away eager childhood, tender motherhood, honest manhood, from the manger cradle over which a wondering Virgin bent, by which astonished shepherds stood, and into which amazed sages from the East poured their willing gifts. Never were there so many in the world as to-day who believe sincerely in the historical Christ. Never before was the promise so bright in the Orient that His Star will rise, never to set, over every nation of the earth, and all peoples will pay their homage at His feet.

Doubtless some great events are imminent. Not, indeed, His coming in the clouds of heaven to force the world's conquest. He is to draw all men unto Himself. The present somewhat general expectation of His coming is significant. He is coming. The sound of His chariot wheels can already be distinguished by the keen ears of prayerful saints; but He is coming in the plenitude of His grace and in the triumphing power of the Comforter. All false religions are to fade away in the brightness of His appearing, and the love of His saints is to be fanned into a constant and consuming flame. Christ is to triumph by the constraining force of divine love over the free consent of willing men. Peace is yet to reign on earth and good-will among the children of men.

It is wonderful how Christ is drawing men nearer together; the unity in Christmas is a significant symbol of this. It has been difficult even for His disciples to learn that Christ's battles are not to be fought with carnal weapons, but by the power of His faith by devotion to Christ's work upon earth and earnestness in the establishment of His spiritual kingdom. Controversies between Christian Churches are becoming as offensive as they are rare, and of as little profit as they are monotonous and disagreeable. Growing to understand each other better, and to love each other better as they love Christ more, the great Christian bodies are beginning to devote all their vigor not to the destruction of one another, but to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan.

The harsh sound of war still lingers upon earth, but Christian nations begin to be troubled with a conscience, and the Prince of Peace is sure to be more and more acknowledged as the superior potentate, before whose tribunal of righteousness all nations, in the last appeal, must submit their controversies. May His kingdom come and His will be done! Through all the murky clouds around us, the light from His rising is beginning to stream over the Eastern hills. Already the "Watchman" has caught a vision of the coming day.

"For lo! the days are hastening on,
By prophet-bards foretold,
When with the ever-living years
Comes round the age of gold;
When peace shall cover all the earth
His ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world send back the song
Which now the angels sing!"

LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

Barton, the old-time comedian of this city, in playing the part of Aminadab Sleek, was wont to make one of the most telling points, when, after declining to subscribe to the relief of a sufferer from a broken leg, he exclaimed, turning to the Lady Somerby of the drama: "Our mission is a higher and a nobler one, my lady. We aim to give to every new-born negro baby a fannel shirt, a moral tract, and a hair-brush!" And the applause with which it was greeted showed the estimation in which the world of that day held the cause of Christian missions. But the mask has fallen off, and the soured-faced female whom the dramatist would have us accept as the personification of the Christian virtues, turns out to be, after all, the Lady Bountiful, in whose train are found all the graces, and whose charities, so abundant at home, are reaching out to the humanity of every race and in every clime. The cynicism that was born of selfishness has been compelled to admit that the cause of missions is that of true civilization, and that heroism is not confined to the battle-field.

It is not one of the least of the glories of the Methodist Episcopal Church that she has never forgotten the origin of her birth, nor failed to recognize the missionary cause as one especially recommending itself to her office and ministry. Whatever else may be laid to her charge, she cannot be accused of half-heartedness in Christian warfare. Every department of her organization, from the General Conference to the lowliest Sunday-school within her jurisdiction, bears witness to the thoroughness and earnestness of her convictions; while the tedious journeys and abundant labors of her highest officials in distant lands attest her sincerity in that these convictions are to be put into immediate and intelligent practice.

The Missionary Convention, which was held at the Central M. E. Church on Monday last, differed only in degree, not in quality, from the hundreds of others that are being called all over the country. But a great city affords opportunities that are wanting in many places, and begets a breadth of discussion that extends far beyond the reach of any mere local gathering. And while, at the meeting of which we write, the names of such men as Dashiell, Reid, Crawford, Newman, Fowler and Tiffany were put forward as speakers, it is not surprising that the chief interest should centre in Bishop Harris, who from his wide experience, no less than from his natural enthusiasm, is pre-eminently the missionary Bishop of the board.

We have never heard any one claim that the Bishop was an orator, and we certainly should not expect from him those exquisite graces of rhetoric that form the charm of the finished speaker. Campbell defines eloquence as "that art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to the end," and in this significance, it would be difficult to find a more eloquent man than the Bishop proved himself to be in his address. If in this letter we confine ourselves to the Bishop's discourse, it is not in any way to belittle the speeches which followed him, but because he struck a key-note which might well be heard by the Church throughout the length and breadth of the land.

It must be recollected that this convention was distinctively a denominational one, held in one of our churches, and addressed itself especially to ourselves as members of one of the great bodies that make up the general Christian army. Napoleon said that the touching of elbows with the men in the ranks was worth more than all other parts of the soldiers' drill, since in battle it not only gave confidence to the men, but necessitated the immediate closing of the ranks when the fire was at its hottest, and so presented an unbroken front to the enemy. The teaching of this drill falls to the duty of the commanders of the corps, divisions and brigades, which collectively comprise the whole body, and the efficiency of the army depends upon the thoroughness of the discipline of each integral part. It is to be our care that the forces we bring into the field shall lack nothing that can contribute to the general result. Denominationalism is by no means so much a matter of accident as some would have us suppose. There are men who, when moved by religious impulse, drift into Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism, or Methodism, as inevitably as the crystals form about the snow-flake, each particle falling into its appropriate place. They do not indicate oppositions of Christian character, but are of one spirit, and their very differences go to make up an harmonious whole. Still it is necessary they should be left to work in their own methods, only taking care that these methods are thorough and efficient. So the Bishop was wise when he told the convention that to succeed, they must work as Methodists. In no other way could the great denomination accomplish the end it had in view. If our report seems meagre, the Bishop must be blamed. When a discourse is so crammed with matter that hardly a word can be spared, it is no use complaining that some valuable sentences were omitted. We must be satisfied if we can convey the spirit of the address to those who were denied the pleasure of listening to it.

The opening proposition of the address was startling enough to insure attention. The greatest evil that can befall a missionary society is a surplus in its treasury. It checks contributions, chills sympathy, and is a forerunner of poverty. Next to this comes a heavy debt, which depresses the energy, absorbs the incoming means, and hinders the work. How to avoid these two evils—to spend all the money so that nothing shall remain, yet going no further than is permitted by the subscriptions to the fund—and still successfully to prosecute the cause, is the problem presented to the managers of the society. The accomplishment of these requires an intimate acquaintance with the needs of the work in all its parts, but above all, an assurance of the amount placed at their disposal. That this must be a steady contribution—not an excessive collection one year, followed by meagre ones—is imperative; and the revenue must show a constant and uniform increase, upon which future operations may be based. Both, as nearly as may be, ought to be reduced to the conditions of a mathematical fact. It must be borne in mind that a successful mission demands, so long as it is in our hands, a constantly increasing appropriation, and this may last for a generation. How shall such contributions, steady in amount, and marking a steady increase, be obtained?

The first requisite is that they shall be founded upon principle. There must be no trusting to excitement, nor any hazardous way of gathering in the funds. And this pre-supposes a second necessity—system in making such collection. Nature, Providence and Redemption are all systematic in their processes, and the Church in its missionary work can afford to be no less. It must be Methodist in action as well as in name. And as a third essential, binding the whole together, there must be perseverance. To put these into actual practice, a plan is absolutely necessary. It must have two inseparable qualifications—first good, then uniform. A preacher may think he has a method better than any other, and it may be all he claims for it; yet it would not be prudent to adopt it. In the economy of the Church the term of the pastorate cannot extend beyond three years. Who will guarantee that the new-comer shall be able profitably to carry out the methods of his predecessor? There must be a touching of elbows all along the line if there is to be no jarring or breaking ranks when the captains are transferred. Uniformity cannot be dispensed with, and any plan without it may be set aside as impracticable. The Discipline, which is the embodiment of the best thought of the Church, gives us a plan, both good and uniform, by which we may attain the objects in view.

To all points of this disciplinary plan the Bishop drew earnest attention, dwelling especially upon the two points of disseminating missionary information, and a direct canvass of the membership of the Church, as the best proved means of securing the steadiness and increase of the collection. With reference to the last he gave an anecdote so pertinent, which touched his auditory so nearly, that we cannot resist the temptation of relating it, in as nearly as possible the very words in which it was told.

In the Michigan Conference the pastor of one of the churches was called upon for his missionary collection. On answering the call, he said, before giving it, he wished to say a few words: "When I went to the charge, at the beginning of the year, I found the parsonage out of order, and the church itself sadly in need of repair. The missionary cause had never received much support, as the Church had hard work to make ends meet, and its collection, confined to a passing of the boxes after a sermon, had never exceeded \$25, nor gone below \$15. But on looking over affairs this year, the official board thought that even this could not be spared, and voted to make no missionary collection at all. And, somehow, I fell in the same rut with them."

The morning after the passage of the resolution was our communion Sunday, and among those who joined by letter was a little girl, the daughter of one of our members, who had been away at school, and while there became a member of the Church. Before leaving the altar, she turned to me, anxious yet hesitating, and asked if I had appointed any missionary collectors yet. She explained that she had been one of the collectors under her late pastor, and if not too late would like to be one here. When I told her that we were not going to take up any missionary collection she said nothing, but went away looking much disappointed.

"Next morning she came bright and early to the parsonage. She said she was sorry there was to be no collection. Would I give her a collection book? I could only tell her that there was no such thing in the house, and that I did not think any one in the Church knew what they were."

"But the little woman was not to be put down. On returning home she wrote a letter to her former minister, asking him to send her a blank collection-book, and a day or two after she brought it to me to fill up for her. Well, I did so; certifying that she was a good girl and authorized to make collections, and the matter passed out of my mind. Church work went on as we had laid out. The building was repaired, the parsonage put in order, and my salary was paid. But it was hard sledding these tight times, and we took no missionary collection."

"On the morning of coming to Conference this little girl met me at the gate with a cheerful greeting."

"Are you going to Conference to-day?" she asked.

"Yes," I replied.

"Well," said she, "I have some missionary money I want you to take with you." And she handed me the collection book with the money. Here it is—\$76.80."

If there were any dry eyes in the Conference, there were none last Monday afternoon at the Central M. E. Church. Whatever Bishop Harris can do, he can make as good and effective a missionary speech as we ever listened to.

CLARKE.

Editorial Items.

Our readers may remember that, a few weeks ago, we called attention to the editorial words of the *Watchman* (Westeyan) respecting a fund to be raised by British Methodism for confectional purposes during the years 1878-80. Those words were a bugle-call for a genuine advance, and the grand movement is going rapidly forward. A council of the leaders has been held, the plan of the campaign mapped out, the first great battle fought, and a glorious victory is the result.

This movement received its germinal impulse at the Annual Conference, held at Bradford in the early part of the present year. That Conference was felt to mark an epoch in English Methodism. It was accomplished, amid rich and glowing communion of the divine Spirit, the organic union of the clerical and lay element in the highest representative and executive body of the Church. That the union of these elements in the presence of a difference of

opinion as to its wisdom and propriety, should have been accomplished peacefully and without the loss of a single minister or member from the Connection, was felt to be a matter of devout gratitude. Moved by a spirit of thanksgiving, the Conference took the following action:—

"In view of the present condition of the various confectional funds, the Conference appointed a committee to consider the best means of relieving the existing embarrassments, and providing, as far as possible, against the recurring accumulation of debt, as also of raising the means for the erection of a new branch of the Theological Institution, and for other pressing purposes."

The committee, at the call of Dr. Riggs, president of the Conference, convened in Gentlemen's Hall, Dec. 29, and was a large and representative assembly. Among the prominent ministers present were Dr. Pope, Dr. Punshon, missionary secretary, and Rev. T. B. Stephenson, secretary of the Children's Home. Among the laymen were Mr. S. D. Waddy, M. P., Sir Francis Lyett, Sir James Fairbairn, of Scotland, Mr. T. W. Poonce, Mr. James Vanner, Mr. James Duncan, Mr. Alex. M. Arthur, and other prominent laymen of London. After three days of earnest deliberation and discussion and the separate adoption of the several proposed sums, it was found that the grand total of the fund ought to be two hundred thousand pounds, or nearly a million dollars. After maturing the plan in all particulars, an able and eloquent statement in the Word of God, the plan before the mind and pressing it upon the heart of the Church.

The first of the special services appointed to inaugurate this great movement was held at City-Road Chapel, London, Dec. 1-3. The morning discourse on Sunday, Dec. 1, was preached by Dr. Riggs, from Eph. 4: 13, 16. In the evening Rev. A. M. Aulay preached a powerful discourse on the presence of Christ searching and trying the Churches. On Monday evening Rev. Dr. Pope, ex-president of the Conference, preached the third of the special sermons from Matt. 23: 13. After referring to the peerless and imperishable memorial of Mary, wide as the world and lasting as time, to the signature, by His own divine hand, with which the Saviour has commended her love and devotion to the admiration and imitation of posterity; to the canonization of this saint by the Lord Himself, and the benediction which He has pronounced on this saint and devoted disciple, Dr. Pope proceeded to consider three things, as illustrated by the apostles of Mary: 1. The dignity and sacredness of the Redeemer's person. 2. The spotless purity of Mary's motive, the rapture and enthusiasm of honorable, grateful love which inspired her noble gift. 3. The cold criticism—unfeeling, unappreciative, unsympathetic, unloving—which this outburst of ungrudging, uncalculated love called forth on the part of the disciples, and the vehement vindication which Jesus gave of His deed and motive, and the high reward with which He distinguishes all who have helped and served Him.

After a masterly discussion of these various topics, it was pointed out that the offering of Mary was made to our blessed Lord on the eve of His passion, when the shadows of redemption were gathering around Him in the hour of His sorest need; and then, by an easy and natural transition, it was shown that, while we cannot now manifest our attachment to the person of our Lord, we can express our deep love to His people, His Church, His Gospel, His kingdom; that His cause at present with us is in straits and difficulties; and that any succor extended to this will be accepted and recompensed as if presented to Himself. The lessons suggested by the matchless story on the subject of giving—not rash and reckless, and at the same time not timid and sparing, but large-hearted, ample, the expression of love which knows no limit and no measure—were admirably expounded and enforced.

The first central meetings directly in behalf of the fund, followed on Tuesday, at the close of the afternoon meeting the president announced that they might now thank God and take courage, for in the London districts alone £31,248, or more than \$150,000, had been raised. Doubtless the entire million dollars will be secured in the time allotted to the movement. Such a spectacle ought to be an inspiration to Methodism everywhere. Why should not American Methodism get ready for a Thanksgiving Fund? We need it to wipe out our missionary debt and to put new forces in all the fields; to relieve our educational institutions from embarrassment, and double the power of our Church Extension Society. Perhaps in our finances we shall learn the principle of the "times and seasons" as Dr. Pope has expressed it, at the close of the afternoon meeting the committee meeting, the steady, regular, equal, ordinary flow of religious work represented by the term "times," and the occurrence in the providence of God of special periods which they called "seasons." We have had our ordinary "season." When shall we have our thanksgiving season?

The last gathering of the Methodist Social Union in Wesleyan Hall was a meeting of unusual interest. The president of the Union, Hon. Liverus Hall, presided with his usual dignity; and after the bouquets of the table had been disposed of, Dr. W. S. Sudley gave an address on the progress of Methodism, claiming that the denomination has had a wonderful growth. He gave an array of statistics which were more convincing than any rhetoric. Contrasting the Methodism of to-day with one hundred years ago, with all its present ecclesiastical organizations, churches, colleges, seminaries, material wealth and spiritual power, he showed it to be a division in that any which is to set no unimportant part in the great onward movement that is to bring this world into subjection to Christ.

Dr. Sudley was followed by Bishop Foster, who thought it should be a source of great thankfulness that God in His providence had allowed us the privilege of being members of the Methodist Church—a Church that God had so signally blessed in all her history, possessing a theology that harmonizes with the divine Word, and not requiring candidates for membership to assent to tenets which the pulpits ignore. Methodists need not fear to assert their own peculiar doctrines and usages, and rally around their own standards. No other Protestant ecclesiastical organization has a policy of such strength and aggressiveness.

Dr. Wm. E. Clark spoke on the same subject, giving a finished and eloquent address. He showed that the Methodist Church had always occupied a place near the heart of Christ, consequently near to the heart of humanity. In proportion as a Church loses its hold on the Divine Master, he urged that the mass of humanity. These ideas were elaborated in a very clear and impressive manner, showing that the people have always heard the Word gladly, while the Pharisees and Sadducees, ancient and modern, are constantly saying, "Crucify the man who dares to antagonize our ideas and methods."

Dr. Cummings, of Malden, made a short but very thoughtful address, expressing the fear that, in some measure, the Methodist

Church is losing its hold upon the masses, but sincerely deprecating any form, or condition of things, that should tend to sever the bond of sympathy between the humblest and the richest of our communion.

A few others participated in the discussion of the evening, which continued to a late hour. All present must have felt it a privilege to listen to speeches so rich in thought, and loyal to our own beloved Church. It is unfortunate that every layman in Boston and vicinity could not have listened to the addresses; they would have felt that it was an occasion of profit and pleasure.

Ira Bradley & Co., successors to Henry Hoyt, of Cornhill, publish, this year, the popular commentary upon the International Series, by Rev. F. N. and M. A. Peloubet, entitled, "Select Notes on the International Sabbath-school Lessons for 1879." The volume makes a neatly-printed octavo of 229 pages, with four maps, a chronology, and a pronounced list of Scripture names. The volume is prepared with special reference to the wants of teachers and pupils in interpreting and discussing the Scripture lessons for next year. Faithful use has been made of the abundant exegetical literature upon the portions of Scripture involved, the credit being given to the authors quoted. It is really a full gathering of the condensed opinions of commentators and Christian writers upon the various verses involved. Our children and their teachers have every facility afforded to interest and instruct them in the Word of God. Three question books accompany the Notes—for youth and adults, for children, and for little learners. The latter volume is written by May J. Capron. These seem to be wisely and carefully prepared.

From the same publishers we have "Sermons on the International Sunday-school Lessons, for 1879," by the Monday Club. This is the third of this series which has been very favorably received. The Club seems to preserve the same names. These sermons develop much more fully than a commentary the Sunday-school lessons, suggesting their special points, and enforcing the moral and spiritual truths brought out. The different writers give a pleasing variety in style, and altogether secure an interesting and valuable exposition.

We have alluded in our Book Table to the discussion over the verses in the last chapter of St. Mark's Gospel, from the ninth to the twentieth inclusive. In commenting upon the passage, Alford finds a strong objection to their legitimacy in the fact that in these verses there are no less than seventeen words and expressions (some of them repeated) that are never elsewhere used by Mark. Dr. Broadus, in the *Expositor* (Quarterly for 1879, referring to this intimation of Alford, says: "This can hardly fail to make an impression—seventeen such cases in twelve verses. It occurred to me to examine the twelve just preceding verses (chapter 15: 44-47: 1-5), and by a curious coincidence, the words and expressions not elsewhere employed by Mark stood out precisely the same number—seventeen." The Doctor goes on to give the Greek words and phrases. About this passage there is no question as to its authenticity; so all the force of the argument founded upon the same condition of things in the verses immediately following, is lost by this really accidental coincidence. It seems, however, a question of small import whether Mark, or some other Christian disciple, at the time or soon after, compiled the chapter. There is no doubt as to their antiquity, and there can be hardly a shade of doubt as to the passage being a statement of facts, and enjoying equal claim to inspiration with the rest of the chapter.

The *Catholic Review*, under the mellow influence of Christmas charity, exhibits the most amusing combination of genial kindness and pertinent sarcasm that we have ever seen in a professional literary sheet. The editor thinks it possible, under the deceitful power of the human heart, that he may sometimes have been betrayed into a censorious and uncharitable spirit towards his Protestant contemporaries, and if this has happened, he is sorry for it and craves a pardon. But then, he intimates that a Catholic is "peculiarly prone—in this way." Upon matters of temporal and eternal interest to mankind, the editor gravely affirms that there is this difference between the Catholic and all others: "He does not merely think he is right; he knows he is right, having the infallible teaching of the Church to whom God has revealed all truth, to guide him; and he regards with a certain puffed impatience the halting and hypothetical arguments of those who are certain of nothing, but who only think it possible that this may be true, or that the other thing may be false." It is this, he affirms, that makes a "Catholic controversialist positive, dictatorial and arbitrary." Yes, verily! But, then, we are almost surprised to find that although he knows positively he is right, he is "heartily sorry" having done so as he has, and frankly desires to "be good friends."

With all this cool assumption and patronizing humility, the *Review* has been a manly opponent, not always scrupulous as to its statements, but usually contending with the weapons of a gentleman. The editor appeals to his non-Catholic contemporaries to account for what he asserts to be the fact, that while he has not seen the record of a single instance during the year, wherein a Catholic has become a Protestant, the Catholic papers have contained numerous accounts of conversion of more or less distinguished Protestants, lay and clerical, to the Catholic faith. He afterwards distinctly affirms that no Catholics during the year have become Protestants, and beseeches "his good (Protestant) friends" to ask themselves this question and answer it. Why is this so? We simply answer that we have recorded many such conversions in this country, Mexico, South America, and Europe, during the year, and there never was a better prospect of so many hundreds following their example; so that we are far from sympathizing with his prophetic joy in that it is becoming more evident that "he who wishes to fight for Christianity successfully must do so in the ranks under the flag of the Catholic Church." We respond to his wish that many non-Catholic fellow-journalists may be enlisted in their ranks during the coming year, by promising to do all we can to set an example of Christian charity and devotion, and to use all our ability to win to Christ and personal salvation all persons, Catholic or Protestant, who, not being justified by faith, can receive the grace of God only through His blood under the hand of no priest, peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thomas Nelson and Sons, 43 Beleeck St., New York, among their beautifully illustrated books for this season, publish a companion volume to English Pictures, entitled "French Pictures," drawn with pen and pencil by Rev. Samuel G. Green, D. D., profusely illustrated by English and foreign artists. The volume contains a royal octavo of 212 pages. The illustrations cover all the provinces of France; the letter-press being the vivid descriptions of a traveler as he passes leisurely over the country. The book makes a very attractive holiday gift, and is also a volume of permanent interest.

The January number of the *Englishman's Review*, containing the "Fishery Award," "F. Edmunds," "Unhappy," "The 'Little' Period," "Cities as Units in Our R. Martin," "The Press by Felix L. Oswald," "The Latin Language," "Sublimity and Grandeur," "George S. Boutwell," "Florence," by Capt. L. and "Recent Fiction," by White. After sixty-two as a quarterly and becoming a monthly, produce a much greater in the treatment of the largely to the amount of a year. The management secured as contributors the most eminent statesmen, and men of letters. The volume is published at New York, and supplied by dealers generally.

D. Lothrop & Co. holiday gift, a finely-illustrated, "Out of Darkness" and drawings by the artist. The book is a rare treat for the eyes. In this instance many between the two beautiful volumes is a gem of a doubling of anxiety, the jaws of and ambitions of the and the blessed revelation. The book is in the venerable poet, J. The poems are worthy illustrations give the thought and image. Price \$2.00.

The "household" year, by extending a portion of Scripture year, and thoughts for The little manual is a gem.

They issue, besides, more story, full of in excellent work; Lowrie; A Boy's Boy; weather. Price \$1.25.

The same publishers of English Literature. This is an admirable much vivacity and While (Mrs. Lillie), and of the progress of the of writers from the It is well illustrated wares of literary homes.

Our temperance enormous that while our own specific work, have a confused idea of reform and charity. Temperance Union, our building, at the Livermore, is a branch and, has for its embracing every class and moral wealth, and is a serious way to further reform. There is a Christian Temperance quarters are at the Harrison Avenue. It for the wretched victim and their families, to and the destruction of by the creation of a p will render it impossible licensed number of illegal room community. The w these societies are the question for the great ought to be sustained thy and generous out of God and their fellow.

The whitest and sheest born in the Boston have been published for the M. suburb of Hyde Park, actively "Reynard," gratifies our readers' epiphany. His ed simply "prodigious," ly to turn a faucet in and humor burst forth are glad to know that have gathered over are breaking away, in progress reach and this debt-burdened least the outskirts and will take down willows. They have and will enjoy the low Melchior in for their redemption.

The American weekly journal of art in the country, Saturday, the 21st, heliotype of the State Capitol at V. able weekly will be value to every great patron of our. Edited by Houghton.

and pencil by
D.D., D.D., profusely il-
lustrated. The
originalative of 21st years.
For all the provinces of
as being the vivid de-
er as he passes leisure-
the book makes a volu-
y gift, and it also a volu-
treat.

The *American Architect*, the leading
weekly journal of constructive and decorative
art in the country, has, in its last issue,
Saturday, the 21st, a very fine double-page
colloquet of the east front of the United
States Capitol at Washington, D.C. This
able weekly will be of the highest practical
value to every builder, and to every interior
patron of house or home. Pub-
lished by Hurd & Howard, Inc., New York.

Harpur and Brothers issue an attractive
library edition of Macaulay's great History
of England, in five handsomely-published
outsize volumes with large type and on fine pa-
per. They are sent out in a neat box; the
whole sold for ten dollars. As a holiday
gift to an intelligent friend, nothing could be
more acceptable. The Presiding Elder of
any congregation, by request, some practi-
cal suggestions relative to the nurture of the
children conveyed within our Church.

The Portland Preachers' Meeting, last
Monday, discussed the subject of the mil-
lennium. Extensive reference was made
on the subject, taking grounds against
the recent Prophetic Conference, and after
a brief discussion the matter was laid over
for further consideration. The Presiding Elder
of the Association, Mr. W. P. Hyde, pre-
sented, by request, some practical
suggestions relative to the nurture of the
children conveyed within our Church.

light, and he wins them by love. Such
crowds were never seen in the Church be-
fore. We have no doubt that the Church be-
lieves in the coming of Christ.

W. P. HYDE.

POST-OFFICE ADDRESS:
Rev. Mark Traflet, Springfield, Mass.

THE PORTLAND DISTRICT MINISTERS'
ASSOCIATION. The next meeting of the Asso-
ciation, to be held at the Woodmen Hall, Mon-
day, the definite time to be announced hereafter.
[The programme is at hand, and will soon appear.]

Members of the Association not herein men-
tioned previously are requested to partici-
pate in the same.

H. F. TORNEY,
L. G. GREENE,
J. MERRON HAMILTON,
M. R. FRANKLIN.

** The world-wide acceptance of Nos. 1 and 2 of this series of *Gospel Hymns*, and the demand for a fresh collection of the same character, has encouraged the publishers to send forth the THIRD BROOK. It will be found to contain a large proportion of new songs never before published, and is introduced severally by the ladies and gentlemen of the London and Foreign Missions, which have been revised for this book, together with some of the most useful older ones. In short,

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FRANK C. MILES,
Treasurer.

The Family.

CHRISTMAS TIME.

BY REV. V. M. SIMONS.

Keep the holy Christmas time;
Love it dearly;
For the stranger
In the manger
Keep it yearly;
Love it dearly;
'Tis a day divine.

To our earth from far away,
Says the story
Full of glory,
Baby stranger
In the manger—
Says the story
Full of glory—
Came on Christmas day.

Born a weak and puny thing;
Still it may be
That the baby,
Little stranger
In the manger,
Still it may be
That the baby,
Is the Saviour King.

May be! Oh, that mother's joy!
How she presses
And caresses
Baby stranger
In the manger,
Still caresses,
As she guesses
He's the Wonderful Boy.

Mary mother, shout for joy!
Say not, "May be
He's the baby,"
Little stranger
In the manger;
Say not, "May be
He's the baby;"
See the Promised Boy!

Joy and peace through time and earth!
What a wonder
Up and under
O'er the stranger
In the manger;
What a wonder
Up and under,
O'er the Baby's birth.

Men and maidens, weep no more!
Break your sadness,
Sing for gladness,
O'er the stranger
In the manger;
Break your sadness,
Sing for gladness;
All the earth adore.

Heart's ease now and happy rest!
All the sages,
All the ages,
By the stranger,
In the manger,
All the sages,
All the ages,
Ever shall be blessed.

Keep the holy Christmas time;
Love it dearly;
For the stranger
In the manger
Keep it yearly;
Love it dearly;
'Tis a day divine.

EDNA'S CHRISTMAS GIFT.

BY BLUEBELL.

"Father, supper is ready."
"Well, Edna, you eat with the children, and when you have finished, come to me. I don't care to eat tonight."
John Grey worked hard every day in Mr. Leighton's great mill, and his appetite was generally good, to say the least; so with wonder and anxiety upon her face, Edna returned to the tidy kitchen.
The little group had gathered around the tea-table. There was Jessie, a quiet, womanly girl of fourteen; Robert, a bright, active boy of ten, and Freddie, the two-year-old pet and darling of the household. Edna excused the absence of her father, and said she would go then and see what he wanted.
"Something 'bout Christmas, maybe," suggested Robbie, who had an eye out for presents.
"No, Robbie, I'm afraid not; you know papa cannot afford presents this year, and Freddie's sickness kept me from conjuring up anything as I did last year. But we'll be happy if we have each other, won't we?"
"I rather guess we will," he answered, and Edna left the room.
"Well, father, I am here."
"Sit down, I have considerable to say."
He cleared his throat nervously, and after stirring up the coals, exclaimed, "Fact is, I don't know how to tell you, but I suppose I must. I was up to Mr. Leighton's to-day—he and his wife wished an interview with me. I can't tell, to save me, what they said, I was so dazed; but the fact is, they are lonesome—not a child nor chick in that great house. Mrs. Leighton wants some one besides the servants with her, and—ahem!—the fact is, they want to adopt you."
"Adopt me? Why, father Grey!"
"They do. They think you are a nice, ladylike girl, pretty and talented, and ought to have a better chance than I can give you. They mean that you shall study and become accomplished. You are to be sort of a companion for Mrs. Leighton—not as a servant, but as their child; and they said you should have some property, too; that was thrown in for bait, I think, for I was just about to refuse, up and down."
"Why, father?"
"Because they said we were not to visit you there, but that you might come home once a week if you chose. I didn't like that at first, but perhaps it was all right. Now I have told you, and you must decide."
"What did Mr. Leighton think would become of you and the children?"
"He thought Jessie was old enough to take your place, but I don't know. That it would be for your good, Edna, is the only thing which could induce

me to think of it for a moment. I leave it to you to decide."
"But, father, if I should go, you would all think me so selfish."
"No, Edna, I think not. We should remember what you have been to us, and know that you acted from a sense of duty. It is our duty to make the best of life. Let your heart tell you what is best."
Mr. Grey left the room. Edna was excited. She looked around the plain little sitting-room, and thought of the kitchen beyond where she had spent so many hours in hard work, contrasting it with what her life would be at the Leighton place.
And then the books! Away down in Edna's heart was one great desire to write. It seemed as if some sweet-voiced angel were constantly singing in her heart, but her mind was too feeble to grasp the meaning of the song. She fancied that a knowledge of books would break the bands which enthralled her intellect, and she could write the songs and sketch the beautiful fancies which floated dimly before her mind.
Ah, here was a chance to study, to read, and oh! how she would write. I doubt whether the true gift of song was hers. If it was, why should it wait for knowledge? Inspiration laughs at mere conventional learning, and flashes out in its own sweet language. But Edna believed in her gift, and it filled her heart with joy.
Presently came the thought: "Why did he choose me from among all the village girls who so far surpass me?" She stood before the little mirror and searched her face, as if for some answer. She swept back the waves of brown, luxuriant hair from her brow, and gazed into her deep, soulful eyes, until they filled with tears; then turning away, she whispered, "I am like my mother."
Ah, child, that is the secret! You do not know—your father does not know—that, years ago, Mr. Leighton fancied his riches would captivate your mother's heart, until she was won by a true-hearted mechanic. She threw away wealth because love seemed the best. Now Mr. Leighton seeks revenge by snatching from John Grey the one idol of his heart—the image of his lost wife.
The thought of her mother drove everything else from Edna's mind, and sadly she reviewed her past life. How happy home was when the mother's loving smile made sunshine the year round. How dark was the world when they gathered by her bedside for the last time together, and the family chain was broken and one link was missing—the father, pale and silent in his great grief; the little brother and sister huddled together, sobbing in a pitiful, frightened way; and she, Edna, holding in her trembling arms the baby—the little one who had been with them only a few months—baptizing its sweet face with her tears, as she listened to her mother's last words:
"Edna, I give him to you, and for my sake cherish him tenderly. Be a mother to these dear children. I can trust you, and may God sustain you, my precious daughter!"
The glory of the dying day flooded the room, and through the golden gates of sunset the happy spirit floated away, up to the great white Throne.
Then to those stricken ones, what desolate days were those which followed! A year and a half had softened the first deep pang, and Edna had been such a faithful daughter, such a loving mother to the little one who knew no other. As Edna recalled her mother's death, those last words rang reproachfully in her ears, and covering her face with her hands, she sobbed bitterly.
"O mother, mother! God forbid that I should betray your trust. For a moment I forgot my duty, but now I see it. I will never leave my home; no, never!"
This was a sudden and impulsive resolution, which did not end the conflict, by any means. Again and again a life of luxury and ease, with all its refined pleasures, so suited to her tastes, arose before her mind, and above all that one wild longing for culture. The struggle was growing fiercer when a low, half-smothered wail from the kitchen reached her ear. Then Jessie's voice: "O Freddie darling, don't cry; stay with Jessie."
"No, no," came in broken sobs. "I want my Edna, I do, Desie!" and Edna sprang up, as she said, "Here is my duty. O my Father, help me to accept it without wavering!"
"O Edna, I'm glad you are come! Papa said not to disturb you, but Freddie wants you so, he can't go to sleep." Freddie nestled down in Edna's arms, and a happy smile chased away his tears. "Oo won't leave Freddie alone, never any more in 'e world, when I wants to sleep, will oo?"
"No, Pet, never again," she whispered, hiding her face on Freddie's shoulder; and that was her last, firm, quiet resolve.
It was late that night when John Grey came home, for he had strolled away from the village, far away to the snow-covered fields, where he realized where he was going, so deep had been his thoughts. What was this man's object in wishing to adopt his daughter? He promised well, and talked well, perhaps it was best, but even if Edna should decide to go, could he give her up? How hard it would be! Weary and sad he turned his steps homeward. When he reached his humble dwelling all was quiet, and the rooms below were deserted. He knew that the dear faces of his children were pillowed in sweet repose in the chambers above. How sad it would be to miss that one

face from the rest! A note lay upon the table. He read:—
DEAR FATHER: I cannot leave you. My duty is here with the dear children whom mother left in my care. Please tell Mr. Leighton that although I fully appreciate his kindness, I cannot exchange my home for accomplishments or wealth.
EDNA.
Mr. Grey bowed his head upon the table, and tears of thankfulness trickled through his fingers, while in his heart he blessed his daughter again and again.
Three days passed, and then the joyous festivities of Christmas eve were ushered in. But it was very quiet in the little sitting-room where Edna sat. Freddie upon her lap and Jessie by her side. Robert stood at a window looking out upon the flashing lights of the village. Presently he spoke:—
"Guess I'll go up town, Edna. It looks magnificent up at the Leighton place, which is all illuminated. Don't you wish you were there?"
"No, Robbie, I might have been, but I refused to go."
"You? Oh! you are joking. I know."
"No joke, I assure you. Mr. Leighton wanted me to come and live there always and be his daughter."
What utter astonishment was depicted upon the faces of those children! Robbie was first to speak, his voice trembling with indignation:—
"I don't like that man, I don't, trying to get you away from us. But you won't go—you won't leave Freddie, and papa, and the rest of us all alone, will you, Edna?" and the poor little fellow held his breath till he heard the answer.
"No, Robbie, I won't go now. At first I thought I must, the life there seemed so beautiful to me; but I cannot leave you all. To-night I felt sad because I had no presents for you, but I've just thought I can give you myself. If you like the idea, I will be your Christmas gift; and a great sob choked Edna's voice, for with this gift she gave all the bright dreams of her heart.
But Jessie threw her arms around her, as she whispered—
"It's the dearest, sweetest present you could give us, Edna. I couldn't live without you, and now you are all mine."
"Mine, too, Desie, mine too!" cried Freddie; and there was an anxious look upon the little face as he slipped his arm around her neck, for he couldn't quite understand all this; but Robbie settled it:—
"Yes, Fred, she belongs to us all. And Edna, I'm going to be awful good after this. I won't plague you any more. It's real handy to say 'you bet,' and such like, the way the boys do, but I'll try my level best to leave it off, 'cause you want me to. You're the very best girl in the world."
Thus Edna was comforted, and though her ambitious dreams had been very dear, yet she felt that the sincere praise and true love of these children were worth more than worldly fame and glory. How many disappointed ones might find true happiness by casting off this longing for fame's bright laurels, and gathering up the rosebuds of affection which bloom all along their pathway.
Feeling that the blessing of God was upon her, Edna accepted her humble life-work with a cheerful heart. She was poor and obscure, unknown and unloved save by the few dear friends around her.
"But out of the scraps of her unused life, The angels will weave most bewildering rhymes."

CHRISTMAS DAY.

As on the night before this blessed morn
A troop of angels unto shepherds told,
Where, in a stable, He was poorly born
Whom our earth nor heav'n's of heav'n's
can hold;
Through Bethlehem rung
This news of their return;
Yea, angels sung
That God with us was born;
And they made mirth because we should
not mourn.
His love, therefore, O let us all confess,
And to the sons of men His work express!
This favor Christ vouchsafed for our sake—
To buy us through His blood in a manger laid;
Our weakness took, that He His strength
might take,
And was desirous that He might us array.
Our flesh He wore,
Our sins we wear away;
Our curse He bore,
That we escape it may,
And wept for us that we might sing for aye.
His love, therefore, O let us all confess,
And to the sons of men His work express!
—Harper's Magazine for December.

OUR BOYS AND GIRLS.

THREE SLEDS.

A CHRISTMAS STORY FOR SELFISH LITTLE BOYS.

BY MRS. O. W. SCOTT.

The bell rang about eight o'clock, just after Johnnie had gone to bed to dream of Santa Claus. Mrs. Ellsworth, Johnnie's mother, found his Uncle Will at the door with a sled in his hand which looked very gay as the hall light fell upon it.
"Here, Annie," said he, "this is for your youngster. I think he is old enough to try the side hill this winter. I'll be over early to-morrow morning to see how he likes it."
Then Uncle Will hurried away, and Johnnie's mamma took the sled in and placed it beside a collection of toys which were waiting to be stuffed into his stocking, saying, as she did so: "What a beauty! Won't his eyes shine!"
At nine o'clock Johnnie's papa came home, and among other things he brought an elegant sled—brown, with gilt trimmings.
"There, Annie, Johnnie was saying only the other day that he wanted to

learn to coast this winter, and I thought this would be just right for our little man," said he, holding it where the light struck favorably.
"But Will has just left one for him—a red one," said Mrs. Ellsworth, brought it forward.
"Well done! Johnnie's a lucky boy!"
When I was a little chap I hadn't anything but a 'jumper' made of rough wood. But I won't carry this back, for maybe he will break one before spring. Boys are always smashing things. By the way, it is almost time for the last train, and I think perhaps father may come, after all."
"I hope he will," said Mrs. Ellsworth. "Johnnie won't think Christmas is good for much without grandpa."
In a few minutes they heard the whistle, and soon after a hack brought Grandpa Ellsworth, escorted by Uncle Will. He was laden with numerous packages of all shapes, about which no questions were to be asked. Under one arm he carried a long flat one, which, after being comfortably seated, he proceeded to exhibit.
"Another sled for Johnnie!" cried father, mother, and uncle, in chorus. "Johnnie has got two now, grandpa. A boy with three new sleds at once! Who ever heard of such a thing?"
"I'll tell you!" interrupted his mother. "Let us give one to Sam's little boy. I am afraid Johnnie is growing selfish. He has so many things, he doesn't know what to do with them, and still he can't bear to give Sam's little boy or Katie Bradshaw a single toy."
"Poo! He isn't selfish. He's just like all boys who grow up to be respectable business men. They say I used to be so when I was young," said Uncle Will laughing.
"If you are afraid that John is selfish, Annie, give him all the sleds, and see if he won't divide. It will do him more good to give one to Sam's little boy of his own choice, than for you to give it."
This was grandpa's advice, which Johnnie's mamma took with a little sigh all to herself, for she knew her small son's besetting sin. Very soon the red stocking was full to the top, and on either side were hung other toys—a whip, a trumpet, and gay reins—while on the floor were a train of cars and the three beautiful sleds.
Grandpa and all the rest admired the display, and soon the great house was quiet. But the night before Christmas is always short; and it seemed to Johnnie's mamma that she had only dozed a little, when a loud whisper came from Johnnie's crib, "Mamma, is Christmas 'most here?"
"No, no, it isn't! Light! Keep still."
"I heard the rooster-biddy crow, I did. Can't I go see my stocking?"
"No, Johnnie. Please shut your eyes tight and go to sleep."
"I can't. They keep open just as easy."
"O dear!" groaned his papa. "What does make little folks wake up so early on Christmas?"
"That's what Santa Claus does just before he goes home. He says, 'Come, little boys and girls, get up and look at your presents.' I heard him say so this very morning."
"Why, Johnnie!" laughed his papa, lighting his lamp.
So this small boy got the whole household astir, for he was very strict with older people, and if he said "Get up!" they obeyed. This was because he was selfish, and wanted to have his own way.
Well, when he saw the host of pretty gifts in the room below he was quite wild with joy. He laughed, and jumped, and shouted, until grandpa told him he made noise enough for half a dozen boys. Before breakfast was ready he had blown his trumpet, flourished his whip, run his train from Kingsville to Boston, looked through two picture-books, broken a sugar rabbit, tried on his new cap, eaten an orange and some candy, and tied his sleds together. These last he took along to the table with him, and almost forgot to eat while looking at them.
"My grandpa-sled is the best, 'cause my name is on it. That's my Sunday sled."
"No, no, Johnnie doesn't slide Sunday," said grandpa.
"Well, if I did it would be my Sunday sled. I'll go to meeting on it. The red one is for brightest days, and the other one is for all the rest because papa says it's stout."
Johnnie's mother looked anxious. "Don't you know, darling, that there are lots of little boys who have no sled at all? Just think how sad you would feel if you were one of them."
Master Johnnie shrugged his shoulders, wrinkled his forehead, and rapped his heels against his high chair. "I guess they'll get along somehow. I guess maybe Santa Claus had sleds enough to go round this year. I want all mine, anyway."
Grandpa and papa laughed at this, but mamma looked sad. Johnnie gave her a sidelong glance, and sighed deeply, as if he really wished he could afford to take the hint she had given. While grandpa stayed, Johnnie remained in the house, for the snow fell all day; but the next morning, after the dear old gentleman had gone, a little boy, dressed in an aster that almost reached to his heels, a storm cap, a gray scarf and bright red mittens, might have been seen dragging three beautiful sleds up the hill near by. That was Johnnie. At first he tried to slide down with them all tied together; but while the "grandpa sled" behaved well and carried him safely down, "Gen. Grant" and "Snowflake" whisked about provokingly. In short, Johnnie soon found

that, no matter how many sleds a boy may have, he cannot use but one to advantage. So he cut the string and took each separately. Pretty soon another little boy came up over the hill. He did not wear an aster. Indeed, you knew at once that there were older brothers at home whose clothes he was trying to wear out. This was "Sam's little boy." His father was Johnnie's father's cousin; but instead of living in a splendid great house, with only one little boy, he lived in a small brown one, and had five boys and two girls. That is the way it is sometimes in this world—those who need big houses do not always have them. The little boy's name was Samuel, also; so when Johnnie saw him, he cried out: "Hello, Sam, see my sleds!"
Sam thrust his hands into his pockets. "Get 'em all to once?"
"Yes, sir," said Johnnie. "And lots of other things. Santa Claus was good to our house this year. Don't these shine?"
"I haven't got any sled. Benjie gave me his last winter, but 'twas all wore out, and dropped to pieces," and Sam looked wistfully at the trio of beauties that would have captured any boy's heart. "Won't you let me take one of yours, Johnnie?"
"No," said Johnnie sternly. "Your big boots has got nails in 'em. You'd rub the paint right off."
"I won't neither," protested Sam. "I'll hold my heels straight up in the air. I never hits a sled with my boots."
Then a little girl came skipping and jumping towards them. She had blue eyes and red cheeks, and light hair flying all about. This was Katie Bradshaw.
"O my! Johnnie! Where did you get all them sleds? I been wishin' and wishin' I could slide. Can't I take one, and Sam one, and you one?" And Katie sidled up to "Snowflake."
Johnnie drew back. "I guess you needn't think you can come over here, and whack round here on my new sleds, Katie Bradshaw. They're my sleds. Grandpa gave me one, and papa one, and Uncle Will one. You can wait till your own folks gets you a sled."
Katie looked grieved. "Why, Johnnie Ellsworth, I never would be so selfish. Our folks hasn't got money like your folks. You know my mother hasn't but a little money. We eat codfish most every day. Now, won't you please let me take this littlest sled?"
But Johnnie only shook his head. "Can't have you smashin' up my sleds. Then I shouldn't have any."
Katie began to cry, and walked off slowly, without a single skip or jump.
"I wouldn't be so selfish—no, I never—and I won't play with him any more," she sobbed.
As for Sam, he pretended not to care. He made a snowball and threw it at the "grandpa sled." "I wouldn't make a girl cry if I had a long coat and a lot of things." Then he started homeward, hoping Johnnie would call him back. He even stopped at the fence, but hearing no invitation to return, he "made a face" at Johnnie, and called out: "Three-sleds! three-sleds! old stinky three-sleds!" Then he ran on, leaving Johnnie all alone on the great white hill. He tried hard to enjoy himself; but his little playmates had taken all the sunshine away with them, and after awhile he took his treasures and went sulkily home. His mother was sewing; so he sat down beside her in his little rocking-chair. "Do you think I'm a selfish boy, mamma?" he asked.
Now his mother had been watching him, and was feeling very badly because he had driven Sam and Katie away.
"What do you think about it, Johnnie?" said she.
"Well, I don't want Sam and Katie to call me so, just 'cause I've got them sleds. Why don't they have things of their own? I ain't to blame 'cause they didn't."
Then there was a long silence. Johnnie looked into the fire, and his mother drew her needle in and out.
"Mamma, would God think I was a pretty good sort of a boy if I should give a sled to Sam—and a sled—to Katie?" he asked at length.
"He would think you were beginning to do right," said his mother in a joyful tone. Johnnie noticed the change.
"You don't say that in such a weepy way as you did the other that you said to me."
"No, darling, because I am so glad you have thought of the right thing to do. Now, just keep on thinking, and see if you can't decide to be a good, generous child—to be like Christ, who is so good to you and gives you so many comforts. You know whose birthday this is, Johnnie?"
"Yes'm, I s'pose so," said he.
Then he slowly drew on coat and scarf, cap and mittens, and set his sleds in a row for a final decision. He smoothed and patted them tenderly, whispering to himself and nodding his head vigorously, then took the "grandpa sled" and set it away in one corner. Then he took "Gen. Grant," and giving his mother a comical look, half smiling, half fearful, he started forth. She watched him, and saw him struggling through the snow towards "cousin Sam's."
Little Sam sat on a log beside the door trying to whistle with an old carving-knife. His eyes brightened as he saw Johnnie.
"Here, Sam, I 'cluded to give 'Gen. Grant' to you, for your own forever. Mamma don't think it looks well for me to keep 'em all, 'specially when I've stop to think whose birthday 'tis, and

Johnnie put the sled on the log, and turned toward home, before Sam, who was slow of speech, could thank him.
Slipping into the sitting-room, he caught up "Snowflake," and started towards Katie's house. He did not care to see her, for he did not know what she might do.
"Katie may cry, and I don't like that," said he, as he walked slowly towards the little house in the hollow. But no one was in sight. He tiptoed to the back door, opened it quickly, and sent the sled half-way across the floor, shouting, as he did so, "This is Katie's own to keep, and wish you merry Christmas."
There was an answering shout, and a rush of feet, but Johnnie was too quick for them, and he only caught a glimpse of a bright little face at the window as he turned at the top of the hill to look back.
The day was over now, and the sun was out of sight; but great masses of bright clouds lay over the far-away blue hills, and as Johnnie looked at them he could almost see a loving face smiling through, and it made his little heart feel warm and glad. Can you tell why?
BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS FOR CHRISTMAS.
Beautiful things for Christmas,
Everywhere we see,
Daintiest of the dainty
Gifts for you and me.
Beautiful things for Christmas,
Fretless ever seen,
Starry crowns, and crosses,
Wreaths of evergreen.
Beautiful thoughts for Christmas,
Birthday of our Lord;
Tendrest thoughts, and purest,
Drawing us to God.
Beautiful thoughts for Christmas,
Breathed in carols sweet;
Songs the angels chanted,
We on earth repeat.
Beautiful deeds for Christmas,
Generous, prompt and free,
Help unto the needy,
Acts of charity.
Beautiful deeds for Christmas,
Each a jewel bright,
Adding to the lustre
Of the Christmas night.
—Emma B. Dunham.

THE LITTLE FOLKS.

HOW SANTA CLAUS CAME TO THE POOR-HOUSE.

BY MRS. J. B. LUMMIS.

It was a roomy, comfortable-looking white house, shaded with apple-trees. It stood a few rods back from the main road, and perhaps that was the reason that Santa Claus' reindeers always dashed by without giving a single glance upon the lane where the bare old trees sighed and moaned in the winter wind. It certainly was not because there were no little children there, for no less than ten found a shelter beneath this one single roof. There was simple Sue, grown almost to woman's size, but a child still, to whom dandelions and buttercups would always be golden delights. Here her mother had died ten years before, and her father had not even left her the inheritance of a name. There were pale-faced Jamie Dyke and his sister Katie. Farmer Dyke had drunk up his house and barn, and his cattle and crops, his honor and health, and when the grave closed over him and his heart-broken wife, these sad little orphans came to the poor-house to live. There were Tom and Jack, Mary, Jennie and Tab, whose histories were all sad enough, God knows; but I am writing to tell you of two little children who were to spend their first Christmas in this refuge for the poor—"Little Cap'n," as people called the mite of a hunch-back boy, who came from his mother's grave to good Mrs. Hurst's sympathizing care, and who could just remember his sailor father and how he had sailed away in the "pitty sip"; and little Daisy, who had opened her blue eyes months after the sea-weeds had shrouded her brave father. A fall early in life had crippled little Ben, and made him the constant companion of his dearly-loved mother, and his little face grew to reflect the sadness of hers.
Baby Daisy was like a little sunbeam that gleamed and dances upon the wall of your darkened parlor. The shutters are closed, the curtains are drawn, but there it frisks, defying shadows and darkness. So Daisy had frisked and danced and sung. Santa Claus had never forgotten her, though the floor might be low in the barrel, and the coal-bin nearly empty. Only one sorrow had touched her, and even after the first few nights of bitter crying for her "dee mama," her smiles began to come back, and her merry laugh made music in her new home. Every one loved her. Old Jim, who had drunk his wits half away, and worn out the love and patience of his nearest kin, had always a kind word for her; and wonderful horses and kittens, dillies and dogs, were cut out by his ready knife.
Mrs. Hurst felt almost a mother's love for these little ones, but her heart had a heavy load of care, and her hands were very weary with each day's work. Old Aunt Lucy Stone took them into her withered arms and broken old heart at once. "The Lord sent 'em, Mrs. Hurst," she would say, "the Lord sent 'em." Her faded eyes were very dim with crying for a graceless boy, who had long since forgotten his mother; but they looked with sympathy upon every little creature around her, and fairly grew bright with glances of love for these little ones. It had long been her self-appointed task to act as peacemaker among the jarring, discordant elements of this heterogeneous family; and it had come to pass that she bound up the dirty, cut fingers, bathed the poor little bruised heads, plied the scratches, was sorry for the

aches, and even kissed the battered little beings about her as if she had been mother to the whole flock. "Praying Lucy," the others called her with a sneer; yet old Jim wanted Aunt Lucy's "yarb tea," when his "rumatiz" was too much for him; and growling "Mother Moody" wouldn't let any other nurse come near her when down with any one of her five hundred complaints. To teach the children about her some Christian prayers was her great delight, and no little pauper dropped off into his dreams without being coaxed into saying something that passed for a prayer. Aunt Lucy had seen a great many earthly hopes fall, but her faith in "God and little children" was strong.
Thanksgiving came and went at the poor-house. It was a feast day there. Mrs. Hurst would have it so; but many a phantom sat at the board, and many a poor heart was sadder than fasting could have made it. Christmas grew near. Little Daisy chattered of its wonders. Santa Claus was coming. He would bring "horses and dogs, and dokes, and slates, and pictures, and books, and dillies—little bits of black dillies, and great big dillies—and!"
The children listened in wonder. It was an "Arabian Nights" tale to them. As the days flew on, the child added to her prayer: "Bess Santa Claus, and make him member everybody."
Every one hated to spoil her little dream, and Mrs. Hurst was pondering ways and means for some little Christmas when Aunt Lucy took the matter up. "Daisy, dear," said she one night when the darkness was settling down, "Santa won't stop here, darlin'; he goes right straight by. I've lived here nigh onto ten year, and he never come once!"
Not come? The little heart was almost bursting with grief, but the old woman soothed her with tender words and the cradle songs her babies had loved. She told her it was Christ's Christmas, all the same, and God wouldn't forget her, if Santa Claus did. If her own fainting heart needed the encouraging words more than the child in her arms, surely she was feeding one of the lambs for the Master, none the less.
Daisy grew quiet as she listened to the sweet old story of the Babe in a manger cradled eighteen hundred years ago; and looking up with her own sweet smile, she said, "I dess Santa Claus don't know we're here; but I dyes f'low 'em tell him."
The days flew on, and Daisy's fears flew away with them. Santa was coming, sure. He hadn't known, but he was coming now. No one said anything more to weaken her faith, and she chattered on, planning gifts for every one.
Heavy snows fell the week before Christmas, and the children kept indoors or built forts in the yard. Two days before, old Jim seemed determined that no one but himself should leave the premises. Mrs. Hurst wondered at his unusual readiness at errand-doing, but thought no more of it. If her windows had looked out upon the main road, she would have wondered what the passers-by found to look at, at the corner; and if she had sallied out to solve the mystery, this is what she would have found in black, staggering letters on a white board, nailed up like a country guide-board, with an index finger pointing straight at the white house in the lane:—
MR. SANTY CLAUS
PLEASE REMEMBER THE CHILDREN HEAR.
Some of the passers-by laughed. Some said, "That is a good joke; but 'Remember the children here,' rang in many a father's ears as he planned Christmas gifts for the boys and girls at home. Farmer Dyke's little boy and girl were some of the children, and Farmer Dyke had been a good neighbor and a faithful friend till the drink spoiled him.
Everybody remembered brave Captain Ben and his pretty wife, and their little children were there. Before night it was all over the village. The fathers and mothers were all astir; the young folks were wide awake, and the children were wild with enthusiasm. Mrs. Hurst was surprised and delighted at a request to furnish a list of the inmates, with their special needs and wishes, from old Jim down to little Daisy. It was decided to have it all done quietly in the old-fashioned way; and even Mother Moody was beguiled into hanging one of her "blue and white mixed" in the long row of waiting stockings.
Mrs. Hurst and old Jim worked late in assorting and arranging the generous pack that Santa Claus left at the door. Some one proposed sending the children Testaments; but the white-haired old pastor said, "We will give the gospel of good works first, and preach to them next summer."
But Christmas morning! Who can describe it—the astonishment, the boisterous delight of the children, the pathetic pleasure of the older ones, whose tears came quicker than their smiles! Daisy, with a precious mother doll and a wee baby doll pressed close to her arms, trotted from one to another in a state of distracting delight. There were "internes and dillies and pictures and books, and dillies—little bits of black dillies, and great big dillies," just as Daisy had said, and that which met the wants of the grown-up children besides; and when to the noisy mirth of the day was added the tender, encouraging words and beseeching prayer of the white-haired clergyman, it seemed to be Christ's day indeed!
But the beautiful day was over at last, and tired little Daisy whispered softly, as she offered a "good-night" kiss, "God sent him, and didn't forget."
"Yes, darling," said Mrs. Hurst, tenderly. "God sent him, but Jim showed him the way."

THE
Practical
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any kind of a va-
barrel, make up
a very best m-
wet cloth, put
fill up with straw
change the cover-
plank on its un-
lamps down un-
bury the vessel
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Never let the bot-
ter, and it will
Potato Cakes.—
ones are best
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Rev. Geo. C.
Crowder
Me., Dec. 4, 1878.
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